

# Commission for Africa

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## **PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

The Prime Minister has today launched a new initiative – the Commission for Africa - to take a fresh look at the challenges Africa faces in the context of the global forces in play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Commission aims to generate increased support for the G8 Africa Action Plan and the New Partnership for African Development (NePAD).

The Commission will conclude its work and report next spring. The Commission will set out the facts on Africa and its assessment of policy on Africa (both within Africa and internationally): where it has worked; where it has failed; where more could be done; and where more support is needed from the international community. On current predictions, despite progress in certain areas, Africa will not meet any of the Millennium Development Goals in the timetable agreed.

The Commissioners will be politicians and opinion formers, drawn from developed countries and Africa. Gordon Brown, Hilary Benn, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia, K.Y. Amoako (Head of the UN Economic Commission for Africa), Trevor Manuel (South African Minister of Finance), Michel Camdessus (President Chirac's Africa Personal Representative) US Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker and Sir Bob Geldof are already confirmed as Commissioners. The Prime Minister will chair meetings of the Commission and will agree the final report. The International Development Secretary will oversee the ongoing work of the Commission on the Prime Minister's behalf.

The Commissioners, supported by a secretariat, will consult a wide range of experts and thinkers on each issue. The process will be open with public seminars and meetings to discuss the themes and issues. We hope that many organisations will contribute to this work. Each Commissioner will host meetings, hold debates and call for papers on the theme he/she is leading. The full Commission will meet once or twice before the report is finalised to discuss and agree its overall direction.

Over the next 12 months the Commissioners will take forward discussions on the key challenges to Africa's development. The themes of the report - and Commissioners' responsibilities - will be decided at the first meeting of the Commission in April, but are likely to include some or all of the following: the economy (including development finance, economic integration and trade); education; conflict resolution and peacebuilding; health; the environment; HIV/AIDS; governance; and culture.

The Commissioners' work will help inform the UK's agenda for Africa during its G8 and EU Presidencies next year.